

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:

Thomas Sheridan, Seine Area Management Biologist
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Amanda Wiese, Assistant Area Management Biologist

Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574-0669

Date Issued: Tuesday, August 21, 2012
Time: 2:00 pm

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #56

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: Preliminary harvest reports for the Bering River District do not support another fishing period this week. For the week ending August 18, the Bering River District survey count was 10,090 sockeye and 2,280 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 2,271 sockeye and 2,533 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District systems were good. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown within the week.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: Preliminary harvest reports for the Copper River District do not support another fishing period this week. For the week ending August 18, the Copper River Delta survey count was 60,915 sockeye and 14,205 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 26,465 sockeye and 5,846 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were good. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown within the week.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Preliminary harvest reports and escapement indices for the Eshamy District do not support another fishing period this week. Another fishing period is anticipated for next week.

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern, Eshamy and Southwestern districts were flown last weekend. Wild stock pink salmon indices have been tracking below anticipated numbers in the Eshamy District and some portions of the Southwestern District, which has led to some area restrictions in the Southwestern District. An aerial survey of the Montague and Southeastern districts is scheduled for this week.

Updated harvest information for recent fisheries targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon are as follows: approximately 745,800 pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Thursday, August 16 and approximately 463,200 pink salmon on Saturday, August 18. Preliminary harvest reports suggest that approximately 270,100 pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Monday, August 20.

VFDA does not anticipate recommending a Port Valdez pink salmon clean up fishery at this time. VFDA began their pink salmon eggtakes at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery on Thursday, August 2 and reports being 89% complete towards a final eggtake goal of 230 million green eggs through August 20.

PWSAC reports insufficient broodstock collection progress at AFK, CCH and WNH and has provided area recommendations for fishing in hatchery subdistricts on Wednesday, August 22. Time and area for future CPF openings will be based on PWSAC broodstock collection progress and wild stock escapement indices.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH THA, WNH SHA, Esther Subdistrict and Granite Bay Subdistrict, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Wednesday, August 22. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Monday, August 20 is approximately 57,000 pink salmon with 86 deliveries reported.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Wednesday, August 22. Waters of the Eastern District east of 145° 57.12' W. long., including waters of Simpson Bay and Nelson Bay, will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Waters inside of the SHTF Markers in Sawmill Bay and Jack Bay will be closed for this fishing period. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Monday, August 20 is approximately 120 coho, 11,300 pink and 2,100 chum salmon with 5 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial fishing for a **12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm** on Wednesday, August 22. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Monday, August 20.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, excluding waters of the CCH THA, CCH SHA, and excluding waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict north of 60° 58.00 N. Lat., will open to commercial fishing for a **12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm** on Wednesday, August 22. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Monday, August 20 is approximately 19,200 pink salmon with 17 deliveries reported.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial fishing for a **12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm** on Wednesday, August 22. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Monday, August 20.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for a **12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm** on Wednesday, August 22. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Monday, August 20.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, excluding waters of the AFK THA, AFK SHA, Port San Juan Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of Knight Island Passage north of Squire Point and west of Passage Point, will open to commercial fishing for a **12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm** on Wednesday, August 22. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Monday, August 20 is approximately 182,800 pink salmon with 81 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Thursday, August 23. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.** Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.